

# The Tripartite Man

## Introduction

In this essay we will be exploring an area that is close to home. We will be taking a look at ourselves as to just what it means to be human. You would think that since the average person spends quite a bit of time with himself, he should have a thorough understanding of who he is, and from whence he came. Sadly, this is not the case. Most people have very little actual knowledge of their origins, structure, and form. Consequently, the time has come for you to be edified in this matter. We will be taking a close look at humans, not from a biological point of view, but from an architectural vantage point, in the sense that, we will be studying how man is constructed, and from what materials he is fashioned. I think you might find all of this useful in increasing your understanding of the role that we, as humans, play in the overall economy of God. Let us begin our quest to understand that most enigmatic of creatures: known as man.

## Chapter 1: What is Man Anyway?

The Psalmist once said the following; “*What is man that You are mindful of him?*” (Psalm 8:4) In this essay we will attempt to answer the first part of this question, “What is man.” If you were to ask the average person on the street this question, you would no doubt receive a lot of different answers, probably all of which, contain some portion of the truth. I will be so bold here as to glean from each point of view those elements that are true, and present to you a comprehensive view of the structure of man.

The title of this essay gives us a clue as to what man is. He is “tripartite”. Now just what does that mean? It is a fancy way of saying that man is made up of three different parts. They are known as spirit, soul, and body. It is important to note that each of these terms have synonyms. The spirit is also known as the heart (not to be confused with the blood pump), while the soul is also referred to as the mind. And finally, the body is frequently referred to as the flesh. These are the three constituents that form the creature that we call man. In this case we will find that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I will now discuss each of these parts individually.

## Chapter 2: The Spirit

This is perhaps the most difficult part of man to comprehend, mostly because it is the most cryptic part of man’s makeup. We spend a lot more of our existence interfacing with the other two parts of ourselves, so we don’t have an intimate fellowship with our spirits. This is especially true if we are not born again.

We may define the spirit as “The inner core of a man, the spark of life that establishes him as a living creature.” It is the part of us that gives us our identity, and along with our soul, makes us unique from every other creature. Our spirit comes from God and its origin is of the spirit world. Think of it as a piece of God that is separated out from Him, and translocated to the natural realm, where if mated to the other two parts that make a human creature, they will form a stable functional entity known as a life form.

It is because of our spirits that we are aware of the existence of God. It is the engine that drives us to seek Him, and the source of the emptiness that we sense when we are estranged from Him. Consider the spirit of man as an echo of what once was, the shadow of our place of origin. It is because of our spirits that we have an awareness of the existence of God. It is our connection to Him, and the means by which He interacts with us.

*“The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, searching all of the inner depths of his heart.”* (Proverbs 20:27)

From this Scripture we can clearly see that God interacts with man through this entity that we call our spirit. Recall what the Lord Jesus said to His followers in the following verses.

*“ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”*

*“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:23-24)

Now you should be getting some insight into the salvation process. I will discuss this in more detail shortly, but for now, know that it has everything to do with the spirit of man. The spirit is the source of our life force. It is as if God gave a piece of Himself to every creature, and this divine spark of spiritual essence sustains every one of them throughout their lives. This is also the part that returns to God upon death. (Eccl. 12:6-7)

### **Chapter3: The Soul**

Working our way outward, we next come to the part of man known as the soul. The first point I need to make is this. You must understand that the soul is not synonymous with the spirit. They are frequently, and erroneously, used interchangeably. They differ from each other both in essence, and in function. The only thing that they do share in common is that they are both non-corporeal. Just in case you are resisting this notion, allow me to prove it to you in this most elegant way. Please consider the following Scripture. (Hebrews 4:12)

*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.*

Notice how the word is able to divide between the soul and the spirit. This is only possible if they are indeed divisible, and they can only be divisible if they are two distinct phenomena. There is something else that we can see from this verse, and that is, the soul and the spirit are also closely situated, otherwise there would be no occasion to have them separated. This propinquity between the soul and the spirit is perhaps the reason that they are so often referred to interchangeably.

Now that I have successfully convinced you that the soul is not one and the same as the spirit, what exactly is it then? It is the part of you that is the source of much of your identity, as well as the part by which you perceive, understand, and interact with the world around you. The soul is the source of your intellect and your emotions. We do find that there is a lawful synonym for the word soul: it is the word “mind”. These words are used interchangeably, and generally refer to the same thing. For the purposes of this essay, I will use the word soul to describe this portion of man’s make-up, unless the context dictates otherwise.

There is a degree of similarity in the functions of the soul and the spirit. They are both designed to receive input from the environments to which they are sensitive. The difference is that they are sensitive to different realms. Our spirit is designed to interface with the spirit realm, while our souls interact with the natural world. Our spirit is in communication with both the kingdoms of light and dark. Whichever side it yields to will have the influence over it. Our souls perceive the world around them, and they respond according to the ways of the natural world. Emotions like happiness, sadness, anger and fear are all a result of perceptions that we have had from the environment around us. These responses are “hardwired” and are elicited from each soul uniformly in response to the same stimuli. This is the reason that the same situations tend to make people have the same emotions. It is important to realize that these emotions stem from your soul, since that means that they can be controlled, because the soul is subordinate to the born again, fully mature spirit. The Lord Jesus speaks to this very issue in the following Scripture.

*By your patience possess your souls. (Luke 21:19)*

In order to “possess” your soul you must have some ability to control it, and to influence its ability to manifest. If the soul were the only arbiter of your behavior, you would have no way of modulating its responses. Therefore, this shows us that there is a modulating influence on the soul. That influence happens to be the spirit. Not just any spirit, but it must be a spirit that has been born again, immersed in the Holy Spirit, and fully mature in the things of God. Only this kind of spirit has the power to shape the soul, and turn it into an instrument of righteousness. Remember that the soul interfaces with the natural world, so it is logical that it would take on the characteristics of that world, which is carnality. Now, the meaning of the following Scripture should be abundantly clear. (Romans 12:2)

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (soul), that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The transformation process is accomplished by living in the condition where your mind (soul) sides in with the mind of God on all situations, instead of the way of the world. The process, by which this is accomplished, is through the renewing of your mind. But what does it mean to have your mind renewed? In order for something to be renewed, it must first be in a state of disrepair. I’m here to testify that the mind that has spent its entire existence processing only input from the world would definitely be in very bad shape functionally. This is why the Bible uses the term “carnal minded” to describe such individuals. So now that we have established that our souls are a wreck outside of the Lord, how do we renew them? Let me see if I can explain the renewal process.

For the sake of this explanation, let us view the soul as a computer of sorts. It will take in information from its surroundings, which is known as perception. It will then interpret that information according to a preexisting template, in order to know how to “feel” about the information, as well as, how to respond to it. The interpretation will always be in such a way as to be supportive of a person’s self interest. In other words, how can this information benefit me, and does it serve my desires and goals above all others?

An example is in order here. Let’s say that you are at work and you have a co-worker who doesn’t like you. He says to you that you are a lousy worker and that he is going to tell your boss that you are not doing your job, which is a lie. These words are then “perceived” by your soul, and interpreted to mean that they are injurious to you. Scanning down the list of “feelings” that are appropriate for this type of discourse, several present themselves. Certainly topping the list would be anger, followed by disappointment, emotional hurt, disturbance and resentment. The soul then decides as to what course of action to instruct the flesh to take in response, keeping in mind that the soul’s primary concern is to look out for its own interests. Having processed all of this, the response will very likely be something designed to injure the person either physically or emotionally. Hence is born the notion of an eye for an eye.

Notice in all of this, the spirit was not at all consulted, but the entire episode was a collaboration between the carnal minded soul, and the flesh. This is an alliance that is sure to have a non-profitable outcome. In the case of the person who is not born again, their spirits are dead. This does not mean that they are non-existent, but that they are not in communion with the Father. As such, they are not in a position to bring godly wisdom to bear on how to handle any situation. The mind that has been renewed, however, has a new template to measure the things that it perceives: the born again spirit. This is the inner core with which we contact and interact with God, and the place where His statutes and point of view are imprinted. Instructions from this area, we find, dictate an entirely different path to be taken, one of tolerance, and forgiveness, and the almost inconceivable notion of returning good for evil. The renewed mind sides in with the spirit on these matters and instructs the flesh to respond accordingly, a task that it must reluctantly endure.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have attempted to give insight into the part of us known as the soul. I have shown that it is a separate facet of our make-up but, yet, it is closely aligned to our spirits, and appears to function synergistically with it. This has led to the erroneous assumption that they are one and the same. Let us now go on to a discussion of the last part of our structure: the body.

#### **Chapter4: The Body**

This part of our tripartite nature is the most easily understood, since it is the part of us that is clearly visible and measurable. But, by virtue of this fact, it is also the part most often misunderstood. There is a natural tendency to think that we consist of our bodies alone, and that all of the functions of a human creature are accounted for in the flesh. This is not at all the case. Although our bodies play a very significant role in our lives, they are by no means the complete picture. As a matter of fact, they are the least important part of us, as well as the only part of our make-up that is actually expendable.

Ok, so now it's definition time. I define the body as "The part of man that houses his spirit and soul, and being physical in nature, it is the vehicle by which he interacts with the physical world around him." The body provides all of the input of information from the natural realm to the soul, where it is processed and acted upon accordingly. Synonymous terms for the body include, the flesh, our house, habitation, and tent. When you are using personal pronouns, such as I, and my, and the like, realize that you are not referring to the body, but to its inhabitants: the spirit and soul. Here is a very good way to understand this principle. Suppose that I invited you to visit me. When you drive down my block and see my house, you don't then say, "There is pastor." But, do you not say? "There is pastor's house." So you recognize that what you can see from the outside is the place where I dwell, and not I, myself. So too, it is with our bodies. When we see each other, we are not looking at ourselves, but the houses that we live in. The reason why this is so important to understand is that we need to know that we consist of more than just this flesh. In that way we are less inclined to allow it to rule our lives, thinking that there is no one to cast a dissenting vote.

It is imperative to understand that we are not our bodies. I recognize that this can be a tall order. Since we all spend so much of our existence living in the flesh, we can easily think that it is all there is to us. As a matter of fact, one would ask, "Pastor, what about the brain, isn't it the source of our consciousness?" The answer is quite definitively yes, and no. Allow me to elaborate. It is clear that the brain is the nerve center (pun intended) of our bodies. It is the place where inputs from the outside world are received and processed. It is the highest order of operational authority in the body. In other words, the body cannot function without the brain. However, it is not the brain that initiates consciousness. That is the role of the soul. It is the brain that receives instructions from the soul, and then in turn, regulates the responses of the body to reflect the wishes of the soul.

The best way to understand the brain is to think of it as a transducer. A transducer is a device that "transduces" energy from one form to another. The most common example of this would be an ordinary stereo hi-fi speaker. This device receives an electromagnetic analogue of an audio signal. It then transduces it into an analogous acoustic waveform, which impinges on our eardrums. We then perceive this as sound. In much the same way, our brain transduces between the natural and the soul in a bidirectional way. To explain this, let us continue the journey of this sound wave to its final destination.

We last left our sound wave as it had excited our eardrums. These transmit the signal to our inner ears, which then transduce it into a bioelectrical analogue, which in turn, is transmitted to our brains. From here the information is passed on to the soul, which perceives it as sound. Now suppose the sound in question was not from a speaker, but it was from a car horn. The soul, having interpreted this information, and concluding that the individual was in danger, would then send the signal to the brain to instruct the muscles of the body to engage, so that it would remove itself from peril. With this in mind, it is easy to see that the brain is an important constituent in the tripartite man. Consider it to be the highest piece of the lowest part of the living creature called man. Remember that the brain is not the source of consciousness, nor does it initiate it, but it is the organ responsible for manifesting it.

“What about memory?” One would ask. “Surely, that is a function of the brain isn’t it?” Once again, the answer is no, it isn’t. All memories, as well as all emotions, are functions of the soul. Even such physically oriented phenomena as feeling pain, a sense of touch, laughter and the like, are all mediated through the soul, even though it relies on the brain to transduce these things if they originate in the natural realm. I know that you might think that something such as pain perception has to be of the body, but it is not. The fact that pain is “felt” in the soul realm is the reason why hellfire is an effective punishment for those who transgress. What good is torment in the lake of fire, if your ability to perceive pain is located in your rotting corpse, which is fast becoming part of the ground?

Right about here, I am detecting some skepticism among those of you who are a little sluggish to stipulate to these things. In that case, let’s examine the following parable, as told by the Lord Jesus. In Luke 16:19-31, we find the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar. Go there and familiarize yourself with this parable since, in the interest of brevity, I will only paraphrase it. We find that both men have died, meaning that their spirits and souls have departed their bodies, and the Lord relates to us their differing fates. The rich man ends up in hell where he is in torment. This, in and of itself, is a difficult concept to comprehend, if you maintain that the things that make for feeling pain and suffering are confined to the brain or to the body. Moreover, Abraham asks the rich man to remember how, when he was in the body, he received good things, while Lazarus received evil things.

If memory was a function of the brain, it would have been irretrievably lost when his brain began rotting in the tomb back up on Earth. The command of Abraham would have then been meaningless, since the source of the man’s consciousness, and his ability to perceive and interact, would have all been lost when his brain ceased to function, (if those things were actually a function of the brain in the first place.) If that were true, it would also make Jesus suspect, since He, as the Creator of all flesh, should well have known that it is not possible to interact once your brain has died. Since it is impossible that a true Creator would not have known this, it makes His claim to deity specious, unless, what I have told you is indeed true. Selah!

Now that we have spared Jesus from demotion, let us continue on in our discussion of the flesh. Where do our bodies come from, and from what are they made? Our flesh is derived from the dust of the Earth, meaning that the substance of our flesh is derived from actual physical components of the material of the Earth. God initiated this process in the beginning, when He formed Adam’s body from the dust of the Earth, and from him took Eve. So consequently, she was formed from the same material. Built into each of them was the ability to take of the substance of the Earth, to form subsequent bodies, which would become their progeny. This is known as reproduction, and it is the model, which has been adopted for all creatures of the Earth. The bodies of all creatures are organized in a specific way, each one differing in appearance from the other. The Bible calls this organizational difference a “kind.” This word is known in modern parlance as “species.”

The fact that there are species differences is reflective of the fact that there are different inhabitants of those varied bodies. In other words, the bodies look different because the souls that occupy them are different. One of God’s highest, and most vigorously enforced laws, is that everything must reproduce according to its kind, or according to its species.

The natural order concerning this is so strong that violations are always the result of direct intervention from an outside force, and always as a result of rebellion. I will discuss this more completely in its own chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Salvation**

As promised, we will now discuss the role of the tripartite man in the salvation process. To the average Christian, a discussion of the nuts and bolts of salvation would, no doubt, seem superfluous. However, judging by the degree of confusion and misunderstanding that I have encountered, I think that I am not a moment too soon. Previously, I have stated that salvation is a process that involves the spirit of man. This is indeed a true statement, and it is important to understand this, especially when you realize that you are least cognizant of the presence of your spirit. Now, you can see why so many people say that there are lots of times that they don't "feel" saved. That's because they are judging salvation by their souls, which are probably carnal, and/or their bodies, which are forfeit. Let us closely examine the following statement by the Lord Jesus. In response to a statement made to him by the Pharisee Nicodemus, He spoke the following. (John 3:5-6)

5 *“ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,*  
6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.”*

Here Jesus introduces the term “born again” to the human lexicon, and typically the carnal minded such as Nicodemus, assumed that He was referring to a natural phenomenon. Jesus countered with a clarification, stating that you must be born of the water, and of the Spirit. So then, salvation consists of two transactions: one being born of the water, and the other, being born of the Spirit. What is this water that cleanses? It is not, as you are thinking, the water of baptism. Water baptism serves as an object of faith that indicates, externally, a process that has already occurred internally. It is not the physical water that cleanses, but the Spiritual water. “What is this?” You say. You have never heard of Spiritual water. Recall what it was that the Lord Jesus said to the woman that He met at the well in Samaria. (John 4:10)

*“If you knew the gift of God, and who it was who says to you, give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”*

Once again in carnal fashion, she responds according to the natural, stating that she has no ladle with which to draw, thinking that this living water could be found at the bottom of the well. Jesus' answer, once again, draws her back to the spiritual. (John 4:13-14)

*“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him, will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

The water spoken of here is a metaphor for the cleansing power of the doctrine of Christ, which is able to cleanse our hearts (spirits) from all unrighteousness.

Having been so cleansed, the Holy Spirit then breathes into our spirits the breath of new life, which quickens us in our spirits, bringing them into fellowship with the Father. Now He is able to write His laws on the tablets of our hearts, and thus we are imbued with a new nature, one that wishes to pursue righteousness and to side in with God.

At the moment of this transaction, let's examine what is happening with the other two members of our "creature-dom." In the time immediately surrounding the salvation experience, our souls remain firmly connected to the natural, since this is all that they have ever known. Every bit of carnality, pettiness and selfishness that was there the day before we got saved, will still be there the day after. As far as our bodies are concerned, it is a forgone conclusion that the flesh cannot be brought into obedience, nor can it inherit the kingdom of God. Its fate remains to return to the dust from which it was formed, or to be translated at the time of the Rapture. So far it doesn't seem as though much has happened, does it? But that is where you are wrong, for much indeed has transpired. The cornerstone of salvation is a spirit that is "alive" to God; for it is here that He interacts with us. It is here that He begins to imprint upon us His sense of the order of things. The very first thing that a new believer will notice is a newfound sense of the rightness, or wrongness, of his behavior. He is very likely to suddenly be aware of a new voice in his head, that of his newly awakened conscience. You see, dear reader, it isn't until there is the presence of conviction over one's behavior that the will is kindled to repent, which is to turn away to a different direction. The Holy Spirit provides this conviction when He comes alongside to seal us for redemption. Recall what the Lord Jesus said to His followers in preparing them for His upcoming departure. (John 16:7-11)

*7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

*8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

*9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me;"*

*10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;"*

*11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

From this we can see that it is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. This means that once He has done His work in us, we will side in with the Godhead regarding matters of our behavior. Prior to this we lived in a world of self-delusion and deception, where we were quick to justify ourselves, regarding our rebellious behavior. Obviously, in a moral environment such as this, we are unlikely to recognize our behavior as sinful, much less take steps to reverse it. We can readily see that the first fruits of our Christianity occur inwardly, and their effects may not be immediately apparent. Or the newly quickened Christian may mistake the emotional release that comes from being set free from sin, as the actual substance of salvation. This explains the frequent occurrence of the so-called "honeymoon period" where, for the first few days after becoming born again, the person is on an emotional high, and he basks in the glow of the light of salvation. But all of this is simply the emotional response to these extraordinary developments in a person's life. And, like all emotions, they only last until they are displaced by the responses to the next wave of circumstantial input. So, it isn't long before the things that hindered the person prior to conversion make their presence felt.

Still fledgling in faith, new converts may place too much emphasis on the witness of the soul and the flesh, so that they do not pay heed to their spirits, which testify, that despite the continued presence of temptation, they are indeed new creatures in Christ Jesus, and that they are quite capable of overcoming in all situations.

The key to victory in this battle is the presence of stewardship over this tender young shoot of Christianity. This requires the ministry of the gifts that the Lord Jesus has placed in the world to be a blessing to mankind: particularly, the shepherd and the teacher. These, working through the Holy Spirit, are able to cause the new believer to grow in faith, so that they may resist the lusts of the flesh, and have their minds renewed. In this way they may perceive and respond to all things according to the ways of God.

I have included this chapter so that the reader may understand how the process of salvation works relative to the various constituents of the tripartite man. We have seen that redemption begins in the spirit of man and, over time, works its way outward to the renewing of the mind, and to the crucifying of the flesh. Once this principle is thoroughly understood, the Christian is in excellent position to walk in victory, because they will have learned to disconnect their sense of salvation from the realm of feeling. Many times I have heard ignorant Christians utter something to the effect of, "But I don't *feel* saved." That is precisely the point. You will never actually feel saved, since feeling is of the soul, but salvation is of the spirit. And it is there that you will *know* that you are saved. Yes, it is possible to know that you are saved. "How can this be?" You ask. Ponder on the following Scriptures.

*12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.*

*13 By this we **know** that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:12-13)*

Notice the use of the word **know** in this verse, and understand that the author of this statement is the Lord, and not me. And by what mechanism do we **know**? It is because we share in the presence of His Holy Spirit, who bears witness along with our spirits that we have become sons of God, through faith in the name of Jesus. Again, consider that all of this salvation activity takes place in the spirit realm but, nevertheless, it makes its presence felt in the soul, for that is where the **knowing** is.

As a second witness to this, also look at 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:12-13.

*12 He who has the Son, has life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

*13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know** that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

Once again it is clear that the Lord wants us to be assured of our salvation, so that we may have peace about it, and to know that He will honor His word concerning the promise. I find this to be comforting indeed. Our choice then is clear. We can receive salvation and have our hearts renewed, and through this we can mature into vessels of

honor, fit for service to the Lord, or we can remain bound to the weakness of the carnal mind, and slaves to the lusts of the flesh.

## **Chapter 6: Creatures vs. Beings**

In this chapter we will widen our scope to look at other entities, in addition to mankind. You have undoubtedly heard the term “human being.” This is however, an inaccurate designation, since humans are creatures and not beings. The difference is more than merely semantic. So far we have discovered that humans are tripartite creatures. They consist of three distinct parts. They are spirit; they have a soul, and live in a body. We find, however, that a human requires help from an outside source in order to be sustained. This outside help comes from God, Who provides for and sustains our lives. We are dependent on a hospitable environment in order to survive. The environment must be provided for us, and maintained by forces outside of our influence or control. In light of these facts, it is evident that we are not able to continue on in existence without help from outside ourselves. Also we have both a beginning and an end. These are the things that define us as creatures. So, no human can lay claim to being a “being.”

A “being” on the other hand, is someone who has no beginning, and no end. He is not dependent on any outside force for sustenance or support. He is totally capable of continuing his existence without assistance. With these definitions in mind, it becomes clear that the only One in the universe that can legitimately lay claim to “being,” is the Godhead. Angels, although eternal in existence from the point of view of “to everlasting,” are nevertheless limited by the fact that they were created and, consequently, have a beginning. So they cannot wear the label of “from everlasting.”

Even so, both the Godhead, and angels are organized according to the same tripartite structure as mankind. They are spirits, which have souls and live in bodies. Yes, God has a body. I know that you thought He was a vaporous non-corporeal entity. But remember, we were made in the image of God, therefore the anthropomorphic model upon which we are based comes from Him. Angels also exist according to this model, and one should not think that because we cannot generally see them, that they do not have bodies. They reside in bodies that are substantially different from ours. They are celestial bodies and, as such, are not made from the dust of the Earth. Therefore, they are not subject to the first death and corruption. They also possess characteristics that are not found in humans, such as the ability to remain undetectable in the natural realm, unless they choose otherwise.

It should now be abundantly clear that the universe is full of diverse life forms, but what they all share in common is they all exist according to the same morphological organization, meaning that they all exist according to the tripartite model. I will now give a brief discourse on the various members of this tripartite fraternity.

**The Godhead:** If you have any doubt that God exists in substantial form, consider the following Scripture.

*26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the Earth."*

*27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him, male and female, He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)*

When words like "image" and "likeness" are used, it is incontrovertible that the image bears a strong resemblance to the object imaged. We, who are made in the image of God, are the copy. Therefore, apart from the original upon which we are based, we are formless and void. It would be like pushing the copy button on a Xerox machine, but not having anything on the platen. All you would end up with is a blank piece of paper.

Consider this, the Lord Jesus had form even before He was born of Miriam. He was the mysterious "Angel of the Lord" who interacted with the nation of Israel prior to His sojourn on the Earth. These things are discussed at greater length in Essays from the Word Volume 1, in the chapter on the Godhead.

**Angels:** In every single visitation from the angelic quarter, the visitor had the humanoid form. As a matter of fact in Hebrews 13:2, we are instructed to be kind to strangers, for in so doing, many have entertained angels unawares. This would certainly be unlikely to occur if angels were not humanoid in appearance. The difference between angels and men is not found in their appearance, but in the substance of the flesh of their bodies. In the case of men, our bodies are of the terrestrial, and in the case of angels, their flesh is of the celestial. We are also informed, in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:40-41, that the various members of the humanoid in appearance club, also differ in something called "glory". This commodity is difficult to describe, but let us say that it is reflective of how much of the "essence of God" that an individual contains as part of their make-up.

**Humans:** As I have previously described, there is no doubt that humans are constructed on this tripartite model. I have included them here for the sake of completing the fraternity.

**Animals:** Now this is an interesting consideration, but believe it or not, animals also exist according to this same model. They too are spirits, who have souls, and live in bodies. They do however, differ from man in glory, even as we differ from angels in the same measurement. Apparently, the further you are from the Godhead in ontogeny, the less of the essence of God you possess. But, it would not be wise to think that animals are largely non-cognitive. Remember Balaam's donkey. (Numbers 22:22-40) Did he not speak to his master, when they encountered the Angel of the Lord on the road? And just in case you were thinking so. No, the Lord was not playing the ventriloquist. It was indeed the donkey speaking his mind to Balaam. The pecking order seems to be as follows.

The angels were made a little lower than God, and man was made a little lower than the angels, and animals were made a little lower than man.

**Demons:** These represent an interesting consideration, for they are an anomaly, in that they exist, as a result of a terrible rebellion, and not according to the economy of God. What we call demons today, are actually what is left of the fallen ones. These are those who were born of women, but were not of human kind, for their heritage was of the celestial, in that their fathers were angels. A study of the Scriptures tells us that during the days of Noah, some of the holy ones of God sinned by co-habiting sexually with human women, who bore children to them. Now these children were hybrid, meaning that they were partly strong, and partly weak. (Which is what you get when you mix celestial and terrestrial) Another way to describe this is that they were the product of mixing iron and clay. (See Daniel 3:42-43) I will discuss this phenomenon in detail in the next chapter. Suffice it to say demons are creatures that now exist only in spirit and soul form. That is, unless they can secure the use of another's body.

## **Chapter 7: Strange Flesh**

In this chapter we will discuss something of such paramount importance that it probably ranks as the highest order of disobedience that can be perpetrated under creation. It is a sin so grievous that every time it has been engaged in down through history, it has resulted in dire consequences. In addition, there are prophecies that foretell of future incidences of strange flesh monkey business, and they all also result in the most severe of responses from the Godhead.

What is strange flesh anyway? In order to answer that question, I will refer you to the following Scripture.

*6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, for the judgment of the great day;  
7 As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality, and gone after **strange flesh**, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude v.6-7)*

In these verses Jude is referring to the very same incident that I just mentioned in the previous chapter, that angels sinned with human females, by engaging in unlawful sexual congress with them. Notice how the Lord refers to this as “going after strange flesh.” There is the paramount order to creation, and that is that everything reproduces according to its kind or species. This ordinance is inviolate, for it is the anchor that holds fast the entire creation of God. If this ordinance is violated, it results in creatures that are not accounted for in the economy of God. Apparently, the procreative powers contained within the seed of creation, are so powerful, that given sufficient provocation, any number of unlawful combinations may result in ungodly offspring.

God finds these creatures decidedly intolerable, and the end result is the destruction of the product of the unlawful union, as well as the severe judgment of those responsible for adulterating God's glorious creation. This is the mind of the Lord. He has ordained certain lawful unions, and has blessed the offspring of those so joined. He has taken great

care in the organization and sustenance of all creatures within His domain. He has even provided for the redemption of those who have gone astray because of the weakness of the flesh. However, when foreign elements are introduced into the realm, as a result of strange flesh incursions, there is no way to successfully account for these elements. For example, the Nephilim, spoken of in Genesis chapter six, were hybrid creatures, who were of both the terrestrial and the celestial realms. At the time of this rebellion, the celestial creatures in God's economy who, albeit rebellious, were nonetheless accounted for by Him. In addition, God's plan for humankind had already been clearly spelled out in the Garden of Eden. This included spiritual death, followed by physical death, and ultimately redemption through Christ Jesus. These hybrid creatures on the other hand, had no lawful place under creation, so they could not easily be dealt with. Therefore, they did great damage to the world of men, nearly resulting in their destruction from the Earth. In order to prevent this from happening, God had to improvise a plan to restore order and balance to creation. By the time this rebellion had reached its zenith, nearly the entire human genome had become corrupted through spiritual miscegenation. Only Noah and his family remained as the Bible says, "perfect in his generations." (Genesis 6:9) All of the rest of mankind had become adulterated in their genomes, and could no longer produce purely human offspring.

Then of course, there was the Nephilim themselves, the hybrids who were the products of the angels having gone after strange flesh. (In this case human women) Their bodies, as well as all of humankind, were destroyed in the flood. The souls of the humans descended into the lower parts of the Earth, into the prison known as Hades, where they waited to hear the everlasting Gospel (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:18-19). For those who would believe, this would be their ticket to freedom. As for the hybrids, although their bodies were destroyed, their souls could not go the way of humans, for their lineage was of the celestial, and those of the royal heritage who sinned had a day coming, but it was not that day. So God's improvised plan consisted of allowing them to roam the Earth, but they could no longer be tripartite. They now exist as bodiless entities that can never find rest, and are tormented with an intense hatred for mankind, who they blame for their current indisposed state. They are now called by the name of "demon" or "evil spirit." Now you know why the demons were so upset when Jesus showed up at the synagogue. (Matthew 8:29) They know that they had a date with judgment, but they also knew that day was not yet at hand.

The fact that they no longer have bodies also explains why they are so interested in inhabiting yours. Have you ever tried to interface with the world without using your body? The demons are not any more successful in manifesting without a body than you would be; therefore they seek to inhabit one. If there are no susceptible bodies available, they will settle for the next lower in glory as an inhabitant: namely animals. Does this not call to mind, the conversation that the Lord Jesus had with some demons while He was sojourning in the region of Gadara? They were reluctant to vacate their human host, but they were willing to settle for the swine who were in the area. The hapless hogs, on the other hand, had ideas other than sharing their bodies with demons. Rather than submit to this indignity, they committed mass suicide, thus leaving the legion of demons, once again, in their restless state. Would you not agree that this required a fair amount of cognition on the part of the animals? This would not have been possible if they were soulless creatures.

Finally, there is one more player in this unholy cast of characters that remains to be considered. What about the angels who started this whole debacle, what was their fate? Unlike the rest of their rebellious cohorts from within the angelic ranks, these angels committed a particularly heinous transgression. They went after strange flesh. For this, they were immediately imprisoned in the bottomless pit where they remain to this day, while they await judgment. These are the ones spoken of by Jude in his epistle. They are not afforded the freedom of bail that is enjoyed by their rebellious brethren who did not sin according to this manner. They are in chains and sequestered from creation, lest they do any more catastrophic damage to God's handiwork. Think about this for a second. As much damage as Lucifer has done to the cause of God, not even he has been put in chains, yet. How bad must have been the sin of these particular angels!

But wait a minute, there is more to this strange flesh business. Notice how Jude relates the sin of these rebellious angels to that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Wherein lies the similarity? Were not the inhabitants of these two cities carried away with homosexuality? Indeed they were, and God considered this to be every bit as unlawful and injurious to His kingdom as what the angels did. Now you know why God considers homosexuality to be abominable. By the way, He is also decidedly, not at all fond of humans lying with animals in a sexual way either. By now, you should see a pattern developing. Any kind of sexual contact that is outside of that, which has been established by God as being consistent with species integrity, is considered to be going after strange flesh. History has shown, and prophecy has foretold, that those who transgress in this manner will be dealt with according to the harshest of punishments.

Speaking of prophecy, there is one more example of strange flesh that we need to consider before we depart this subject. The book of Daniel describes a vision that came to king Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. In this dream, he saw the giant image of a man, who was made up of different metals and substances. These metals were arranged in descending order of value as the image went from head to foot. Finally, as the image progressed to the feet, it was revealed that they were made of iron, mixed with clay. (Daniel 2:41-43) This image was indicating the various kingdoms of men that would arise on the Earth during the "Times of the Gentiles." The last kingdom would be partly strong (celestial) and partly weak (terrestrial). This prophecy shows that the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly realm will once again attempt to adulterate the seed of men, as they did in the days of Noah. But once again they will fail, and the outcome will be terrible destruction rained down on the inhabitants of the Earth.

It is clear that God takes the integrity of His creation very seriously, and that He does not abide anyone who would pervert it by violating His fundamental laws regarding the preservation of the species. It would then be very wise, not to be found to be one of the transgressors, who go after strange flesh. For those who do, will find no hiding place in that day. Not even the rocks will shield them from the wrath of God.

## **Chapter 8: Evolution?**

I would not be complete in my discourse on the origin of mankind if I didn't mention the outrageous fallacy of evolution. In brief, the theory of evolution maintains that mankind is the result of countless millions of fortuitous accidents of nature, beginning with a mysterious "Big Bang" some 12-15 billion years ago. Moreover, it is believed that

these “accidents” worked in an upstream direction, relative to the natural order of the function of the universe with regards to the utilization of energy within a closed system. I will explain this further, later on when we talk about entropy. Then there are those who believe that God, in beginning, created the Heavens and the Earth, and that He made man from the dust of the Earth. Obviously, these two approaches as to the genesis of man are diametrically opposed, so one of them must be fatally flawed. Which one of these assertions, then, is correct? They both require a non-quantifiable entity known as faith, which is the act of accepting the truth of something without having seen the actual evidence of its existence.

In the essay “Questions that Demand Answers,” I had the occasion to write about evolution and, inasmuch as the revelation was indeed compelling, I do not see the need to try to improve on it here, so I will include portions of those letters here as well.

There are those who maintain that the presence of the "theory" of evolution militates against the literal acceptance of the Bible. I offer up the following observation. It requires far more "faith" to believe that the existence of the present universe can be accounted for by eons of random quantum events, than it does to accept that it is the product of intelligent design and implementation. The discipline of science is in no way inimical to the notion of a hands-on God in the initiation and maintenance of this universe. As a matter of fact, science is merely the study of God's grand creative design. In every great scientific endeavor, there is an end point beyond which logic fails to explain. This is the place where you will find God. So then, science is not the hindrance to faith in God, but it is the scientists who are.

Concerning evolution, it has been said that those who believe in the Bible cannot explain evolution. Well those who believe in evolution, cannot explain evolution either! How dare they hold the people of faith to a higher standard than those who trust in uncertain knowledge! It is universally understood that there is no actual verifiable evidence that life here on Earth resulted from a series of random quantum events.

No matter how long one is willing to wait, the law of entropy requires that closed systems proceed from a state of order to disorder, never in the reverse. In every conceivable system that one cares to observe, the ordered low entropy state is always the result of outside influence, accompanied by the expenditure of much more energy than the system itself is capable of producing. This model is observed 100% of the time throughout the known and unknown universe. It is utterly fallacious to think that the one time this model was not followed was in the introduction of life on Earth. No, I'm afraid that life on this planet could not have possibly formed without outside help. Most reasonable people, and I, choose to call this outside influence God. As I have previously stated, it requires far more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe in a divine Creator. The notion of evolution serves as a sandbar on which the proud and self-righteous stand. What they don't realize is that they are standing on shifting sand. In other words, evolution is the refuge for those who refuse to receive the true witness of the creation; which is declaring the glory of God. The only ones who don't see this are the fools who, having been blinded by pride, say in their hearts there is no God.

There is an evolution like analogue that is actually valid. It is called natural selection. This process speaks to the ability of a species to adapt to a changing natural environment. The changes result in genotypic modifications that produce alterations in phenotype, but not in species. The way this works is as follows. A white moth that is consistent in coloring with its background is harder to be seen and then eaten by birds. But as those backgrounds become darker in coloring due to soot production, the lighter colored moths are easily seen and eaten. Moths that end up as dinner do not survive to procreate. However, the darker ones do. So then over time the species becomes darker in color, as an adaptation to its surroundings. It does remain, however, the same species. I think that it is safe to say that much of the diversity that we see in creation today is directly the result of natural selection.

## **Chapter 9: Death and Life**

In this chapter, we will take a look at these two fundamental conditions that all who are born of woman will experience. Surprisingly, there is quite a bit of ignorance on these matters. I will now attempt to give you clarity on these issues. We will first examine the concept of life, and we will do so in the context of the tripartite nature of man that we have previously discussed. There are several conditions that must be met before someone is considered to be alive. Firstly, they must be in a body that is physiologically sound. This means that all of their vital organs must be at least marginally functional. Secondly, their soul must be present, and finally, their spirit must also be present. For the Bible tells us that the body without the spirit is dead. (James 2:26) This was also wonderfully demonstrated in the beginning, when the Lord made Adam from the dust of the Earth. We find that Adam was fully formed, but was not made alive until God “breathed” the breath of life into his nostrils. It was only then that he became “Nephesh” which is Hebrew for “a living creature.” Now consider for a moment this breathing that God did. Contrary to what you may think, it was not the act of initiating respiration, for that is purely physiological and, as such, it is of the body, and will function automatically if the body is sound. But this “breath,” that God breathed into Adam, was actually depositing in him, that essence of Himself, that we have come to call the spirit.

There is another facet of life that you may not have considered. Life consists of much more than merely metabolizing and excreting. You will find that the concept of life is integrally linked to our relationship with the Godhead. We are not considered to be truly alive unless we are in communion with the Creator. Jesus said that He has come that we might have life, and that we may have it more abundantly. He was not speaking to corpses, but to individuals who were fully intact from a tripartite point of view. Yet despite this, they still needed to obtain life. We can clearly see that life is inextricably linked to our having a relationship with God, and that without this, we are dead, even as we manifest all of the signs of one who is metabolically active.

Consider what God said to Adam in the garden, in warning him about the consequences of disobedience.

*16 And the Lord God commanded the man saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;*

*17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).*

Well you know what happened. Adam ate, and he indeed died. But, did that mean that he ceased to exist? Of course not, for where, then, would humanity be found? So, what manner of "death" did he suffer? It was separation from fellowship with the Godhead.

This now brings us to a discussion of death. What we can say about it is this. Inasmuch as life consists of more than merely existing, we can also say that death is defined by more than merely falling into oblivion. It is expedient to look at death as the opposite of life. Thus, if life is the presence of communion with the Godhead, then death must be the separation from the same. We find that the Bible teaches there are two kinds of death: the first death and the second death. I define the first death as a separation of one's spirit and soul from their body, which has ceased to function. The second death is defined as the permanent separation of the soul from communion with the Father. In both cases, oblivion is not in play. So, in case you were thinking that you could escape eternal judgment by going up in a puff of purifying smoke, think again. Every soul is immortal, meaning that the existence of that soul will not cease. But the domicile of that soul may be in unpleasant places if that soul has been disobedient, while at home in the body.

We may safely conclude the following. In order to be physically alive, you must be fully tripartite, and in order to be spiritually alive, you must have fellowship with the Godhead.

## **Conclusion**

It has been my aim in this essay to give you, the reader, a more complete understanding of the make-up of man. I think that if we know ourselves better, we are then in a better position to understand how we fit into God's plans and purposes. Hopefully, you have gained insight into the three distinctly different parts of which we are made. In addition, you should now also better understand how the process of salvation is mediated in our lives. Finally, we discussed some of the peripherally related issues to the tripartite man, such as the concept of strange flesh and evolution.

My desire for you all is that you may grow by these revelations, and have your understanding enhanced, so that you may be better prepared to serve the kingdom of the living God. May He preserve you in all grace, and mercy, and fill your hearts with love and faith, so that you may please Him in all of your ways, that His Spirit may fill you: spirit, soul, and body. Amen.